



Unable to find top-quality chocolate in India, Zaver Divecha took matters into her own hands and started her own venture



My Hometown: Zaver Divecha

The owner of Bangalore gourmet chocolate shop Gallianoz talks truffles with Isabel Putinja

Q HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE CHOCOLATE-MAKING BUSINESS?

It happened by accident. I used to work in the corporate world. I couldn't find any chocolate in India that came close to the chocolate I'd eaten during my travels abroad. I love cooking and wanted to make some homemade chocolates to give to friends as gifts. People liked them, the word spread, and I started to get orders. I don't advertise. Customers come to me through word of mouth.

Q HOW DID YOU LEARN YOUR CRAFT?

I started experimenting through trial and error. I added more and more flavours and today offer 25 to 30 different varieties. During a trip to Belgium, I visited several chocolatiers to see what kind of chocolate they offer. I saw that the chocolate-making process they used was similar to mine. They were surprised to meet an Indian who makes chocolate. They loved my chocolate, I'm pleased and relieved to say!

Q WHAT MAKES YOUR CHOCOLATE UNIQUE?

My chocolates are handmade and everything is made in-house. I use fresh, high-quality ingredients, some of which are imported. The cocoa comes from Ghana. I've perfected the recipe for truffles, which are used as a filling. It's a secret – none of my staff knows it!

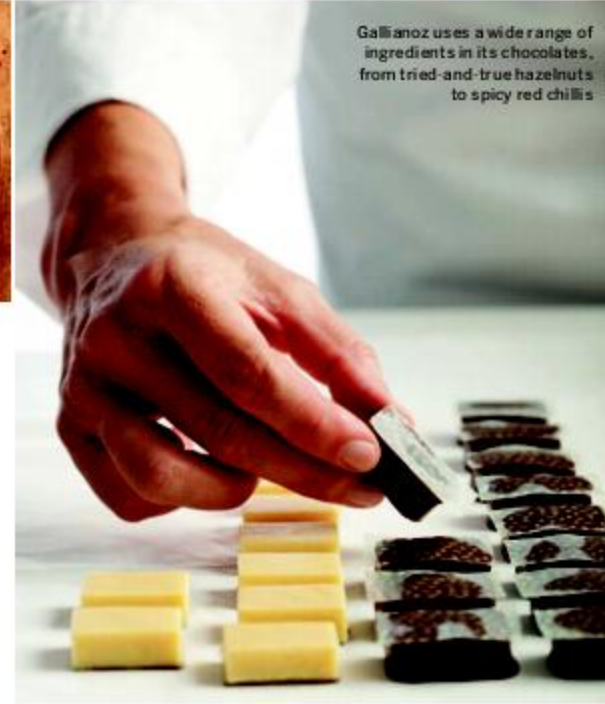
Q DO YOU ADAPT TO INDIAN TASTES?

I do get requests from clients for different flavours

and I love to experiment. I've made chocolates with custom flavours like cardamom, pistachio, coconut and even red chilli! But the most popular are the standard ones like roasted almond, hazelnut, caramel and rum and raisin.

Q WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

I have an elite clientele and supply mostly to companies that give the chocolates to their clients as gifts, especially during the festive season. My clients o



Gallianoz uses a wide range of ingredients in its chocolates, from tried-and-true hazelnuts to spicy red chillies



include large international hotel chains, car dealerships and luxury brands. I also have a faithful clientele of chocolate connoisseurs.

Q WHAT'S YOUR BUSIEST PERIOD?
Definitely during the last four months of the year. It starts about one month before Diwali and runs through the Christmas holiday period. e



INSIDER

Bangalore

Karnataka's vibrant capital is home to great food and a host of sights. Zaver Divecha shares her tips



MTR or Mavalli Tiffin Rooms (11 Lalbagh Rd, tel: +91 (0)80 2222 0022) is a Bangalore breakfast institution, famous for its excellent South Indian food. Olive Beach (16 Wood St, Ashok Nagar, tel: +91 (0)80 4112 8400) has a great ambience and is a nice place to relax with friends. Try the risotto. I like the appetisers at Sunny's (34 Vittal Mallya Rd, tel: +91 (0)80 4132 9366).



My young daughter and I love to go to the movies together. We usually go to the INOX at Garuda Mall (Magrath Rd, www.garudamall.net). Cubbon Park is my favourite park in Bangalore. It's a nice place to take a stroll. My daughter and I both love to read so we're regular visitors to Sapna Bookhouse (32 Residency Rd, tel: +91 (0)80 4916 6999, www.sapnaonline.com).



I like to take visitors to Bangalore Palace. There's a one-hour audio tour that's well done and reveals interesting facts about the palace and the family of the former Maharajah of Mysore. The city has a lot of green spaces like Lalbagh Botanical Gardens, which provides ideal respite from some of the less relaxed parts of the city and hosts a flower show twice a year.



Coorg is my favourite escape. I stay with a family at a homestay located on a coffee plantation. This is a wonderful place to get back to nature as it's set amid some really beautiful scenery and there's plenty of fresh air. I also enjoy visiting Mysore because there's lots to see: there's the palace and the gardens. It's a pleasant city, though it's changing quickly.